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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2006

In Today's Papers

Buyukanit Visits Greece

All papers report Turkish General Staff (TGS) Chief General Yasar Buyukanit on Wednesday kicked off a four-day official visit to Athens at the invitation of his Greek counterpart Admiral Panayotis Hinofotis. Milliyet reports Buyukanit was given a "head of state" reception in Athens. Buyukanit, the first Turkish army chief to ever visit Greece, is to meet with Defense Minister Evangelos Meimerakis today before hosting a dinner for Admiral Hinofotis at the Turkish Embassy in Athens. The two commanders are expected to discuss primarily confidence building measures in the Aegean rather than political issues such as Cyprus. Hinofotis was hosted by the former TGS Chief General Hilmi Ozkok during first his visit to Turkey this past July - the first by a Greek Chief of Staff in 32 years.

Gul, Rehn on Turkey-EU, Cyprus

All papers: Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul, in Moscow to take part in the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) foreign ministers' meeting, rejected at a press conference after meeting with the Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov the EU criticism that the pace of reform was decelerating in Turkey. "Our government is aware that the EU negotiation process will be favorable for Turkey. We have a great determination to continue the reforms process," Gul maintained. He also noted "Turkey and Russia consider the Cyprus issue should solved under the UN mandate. President Putin and other Russian authorities consider that commercial ties between Turkish Cyprus and Russia should be boosted." Papers report Greek Cypriots opposed an attempt by the EU term president Finland to hold a summit meeting this weekend regarding Cyprus because Turkish Cypriots were invited to participate as a separate party. Zaman says Turkish Cyprus was the only party to have officially agreed to attend the meeting.

In an interview with the French daily Liberation, EU Enlargement Commissioner Olli Rehn said ties between Turkey and the EU were

"schizophrenic," adding that membership talks with Turkey should not be suspended. Nicolas Sarkozy, the French presidential hopeful in next year's election, said the recognition of the Greek Cypriot state was a precondition even for a "privileged partnership" status for Turkey.

PKK Offices in Northern Iraq Re-opened

Milliyet, Cumhuriyet: Offices of terrorist PKK affiliated Kurdistan Democratic Solution Party (PCDK) re-opened in Northern Iraq on Wednesday upon the decision of a regional court, reported the news agencies. According to reports, offices also flew PKK flags again.

Commenting on northern Iraq in the liberal daily Radikal, Gunduz Aktan speculates on the fate of Kirkuk and the implications for Turkish policy: "The Kurdish Administration is planning to search for oil in its own territory by approving a new oil law, in violation of the constitution. Moreover, with a newly prepared draft Kurdish Regional Constitution, Kurds are planning to include, not only Kirkuk but many Sunni and Arab regions, including Mosul, in their territory. Allegedly, the US is very tired of the Kurds' excessive ambition and plans to leave Kirkuk to the Sunni Arabs in exchange for stopping the insurgency. Hopefully this suggestion, which has Turkey's support as well, will also serve to prevent the establishment of a Kurdish State. In sum, we are heading toward a huge confusion. Therefore, we should produce a policy with a solution considering every possibility."

Also writing on northern Iraq, Cengiz Candar noted in the conservative Bugun: "Obviously the Iraqi resistance groups, both Shiites and Sunnis, are using more violence to validate their political agendas because they simply realized the shaking influence

ANKARA 00006239 002 OF 003

of violence in American domestic politics. On the other hand, violence is not only aimed against the US presence. Iraqi groups are using violence to counter each other. At this current stage, there is only one area, Iraq's north, which remains stable to a certain extent. But Turkey is allergic to northern Iraq. To make a reasonable assumption regarding the future of Iraq, we should wait until the US Congressional elections are over. Yet there is still a fair analysis that can be made at this point: Iraq will continue to be unstable from some time to come. Turkey will have to make its policy assessments without ignoring this very fact."

Heavy Floods Hit Turkey's South, Southeast

All papers report that so far 32 people, including seven children, have died in heavy floods sweeping Turkey's southeast region in the worst flooding the region saw in 50 years. Eighteen were killed in the mainly Kurdish southeastern city of Diyarbakir and three others in the nearby town of Silopi in the past 48 hours. In the Mediterranean city of Mersin, dozens of homes and businesses have been flooded. The Turkish Red Crescent sent 2,500 blankets, 200 tents and seven mobile kitchens to Diyarbakir, Sanliurfa and Sirnak. "Not fate, Neglect" says a Milliyet headline, stressing that the high death toll and devastation in the impoverished southeast region are a direct result of poor infrastructure and shoddy building practices. Hurriyet compares under the headline, "Like a Tsunami," the flooding in Turkey to recent disasters in Asia, noting Istanbul and the Mediterranean cities of Antalya and Mersin have also been badly hit.

US Investment in Turkey

All papers reported that KocSistem-owned by Koc Information Technologies Group-has sold Biletix, which was founded in 2000 as a more convenient way for consumers to purchase tickets and get information on entertainment and sporting events throughout Turkey, to the world's leading ticket sales company, Ticketmaster. California-based Ticketmaster has over 6,600 retail ticket sales counters, 19 international call centers and many international web sites. Today's papers also report that RTUK approval of the sale of television station TGRT to US businessman Rupert Murdoch. Sabah reports that speaking at the 'Russell 20-20 Forum', US Ambassador Ross Wilson praised the Turkish economy to the gathered investors and urged them to include Turkey in their investment plans.

TV Highlights
NTV, 7.00 A.M.

Domestic News

- A 4.8-magnitude earthquake has been reported in the southeastern province of Bingol.
- The main opposition CHP lawmaker Onur Oymen said his party would not permit any changes to the controversial Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code.
- Turkey's chief EU negotiator Ali Babacan is due in Athens for talks with Greek Foreign Minister Dora Bakoyannis.
- Professor Muazzez Ilmiye Cig, a 92-year-old retired expert on the ancient Sumerian civilization of Mesopotamia, has been acquitted of charges against her for saying that 5,000 years ago Islamic-style headscarves were worn by priestesses who initiated young men into sex.
- World Bank Turkey director Andrew Vorkink supported the complaints of the Turkish Central Bank that wage hikes granted to civil servants could harm the fight against inflation.

International News

ANKARA 00006239 003 OF 003

- A massive Israeli security operation in the northern Gaza Strip left six Palestinians and one Israeli soldier killed, wounding 35 others.
- Sunni insurgents have cut the roads linking Baghdad to the rest of Iraq and the country is being partitioned as militiamen battle for control of towns north and south of the capital, the British Independent reported.
- British army General David Richards said NATO needs more troops in Afghanistan to secure a victory over Taliban fighters in the coming months.
- China has adopted new rules requiring review of all death sentences by the Supreme People's Court in the face of domestic and international criticism of Beijing's extensive use of capital punishment.

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